February 13, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR FILE - CO-2-34030

At 2:30 p.m., February 12, 1969, at the request of Mr. Harry R. Van Cleve, Jr., General Counsel, General Services Administration, the following persons met in the Director's Conference Room at 1800 G Street, N.W.: Assistant Director Kelley, Assistant Director Peterson, Legal Counsel Robert Goff, Special Agent in Charge John E. Parker, Harry Van Cleve, GSA, James B. Rhoads, Archivist of the United States, Dudley Chapman, Office of the Legal Counsel, Department of Justice, and Byron E. Harding, Associate General Counsel, GSA.

Mr. Van Cleve outlined the problem he wished to discuss, stating that some weeks ago, at the request of the Attorney General of the United States, a panel of physicians reviewed the autopsy slides made by the physicians at the Naval Hospital relative to the assassination of the late President Kennedy. In their report, which was made a matter of public record, they mentioned that the material they examined was furnished to them by the Archivist of the United States, and was included on an inventory list which accompanied the letter from Dr. George C. Burkley to Mrs. Lincoln, dated April 26, 1965. Mr. Van Cleve stated that this was a gratuitous statement made by the doctors and it would have been so much better if they had merely indicated what material they had examined.

Mr. Van Cleve then went on to explain that at some unspecified date there was placed in a bin at the Archives a quantity of material in sealed cardboard boxes and a locked foot locker. This material was received from the Kennedy offices, presumably from Mrs. Lincoln.

Subsequently, in October, 1966, the family of the late President Kennedy made a gift to the United States of certain specified articles which were further described in the letter to Lawson B. Knott, Jr., Administrator of General Services, from Burke Marshall on behalf of the Executor of the Estate of John F. Kennedy, dated October 29, 1966. The articles to be given to the Archivist were in the sealed boxes and the foot locker mentioned above, and when the Archivist took possession of and opened these containers a careful inventory of the contents was made. A key to the foot locker was produced by Angela M. Novello, Secretary to Senator Robert F. Kennedy. When the foot locker was opened, it was found to contain articles No. 1 through 8 listed on the inventory prepared by Dr. Burkley on April 26, 1965.

A careful search was made in the Archives to ascertain what happened to the articles described in Item No. 9 of Dr. Burkley's inventory and they cannot be found in the Archives.

never saw nor heard anything about its disposition, and that he was surprised to hear that it was not with the remainder of the material he turned over to Mrs. Lincoln. After discussing the problem, Dr. Burkley offered to call Mrs. Lincoln. He did this in my presence and Mrs. Lincoln told him that all of the material he turned over to her was placed in a trunk or foot locker; that it was locked, and that to her knowledge it was never opened nor the contents disturbed by her. She said, however, that sometime after its receipt all of the material concerning the assassination, with which she was working, was turned over to Angie Novello, Robert Kennedy's Secretary. (Angela Novello is said to be a secretary to Mr. Angier Biddle Duke, Ambassador to Denmark).

Dr. Burkley said that Henry Giordano, former White House driver who is known to us, was also an employee of the Kennedy family at that time and was working with Mrs. Lincoln. Giordano is now a Doorkeeper at the U. S. Senate. He is under Senator Pastore's patronage, but actually works for Senator Kennedy's office. It is my opinion that Giordano should not be talked to concerning this matter.

On February 13, I called Harry Van Cleve and advised him of the results of the conversation with Dr. Burkley, and further advised him that, in my opinion, we should not contact Giordano. He agreed with this and stated he felt that the inquiry would have to remain as it now stands; that perhaps we were borrowing trouble in exploring it any further, and assured me that the Archivist had made a thorough search of all of the material on hand to make sure that the material in question had not been received by the Archivist at another time or under other circumstances.

Thomas J. Kelley
Assistant Director (PI)

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